

## ABSTRACT

The present invention provides NB-ARC and CARD-containing  
5 proteins (NACs), nucleic acid molecules encoding NACs and  
antibodies specific for at least one NAC. The invention  
further provides chimeric NAC proteins. The invention  
also provides screening assays for identifying an agent  
that can effectively alter the association of a NAC with  
10 a NAC-associated protein. The invention further provides  
methods of modulating apoptosis in a cell by introducing  
into the cell a nucleic acid molecule encoding a NAC or  
an antisense nucleotide sequence. The invention also  
provides a method of using a reagent that can  
15 specifically bind to a NAC to diagnose a pathology that  
is characterized by an increased or decreased level of  
apoptosis in a cell.